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ABSTRACT

Using the concept of organizational effectiveness to aid in the development of a statewide policy for educational information centers (EICs), a project described and analyzed selected organizational features of 28 Pennsylvania Educational Information Centers. Six organizational attributes, dealing with structure, policy, and process (legitimacy, funding, staff, clients, connections, and information) were examined as they appear in the 28 Pennsylvania units. Using the six organizational features, the sample was first described to give a sense of the variety and similarity in the way the centers operate. Next, comparisons among the units were made by means of an intra-sample rating to identify areas that were most effectively organized. Then a panel of national experts from outside Pennsylvania rated the organizational features in a forced choice model. The study revealed that an EIC can be operated effectively under a variety of organizational forms and that the task of communicating what EICs are all about is consistently and seriously underestimated. It was also found that sponsorship makes important contributions to the survival quotient of EICs. Effective utilization of policy units, reports, planning, staff, information, and networking are among key EIC success factors. At present EIC funding is uncertain. (MN)

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THE ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL BROKERING UNITS: ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Not many years have passed since the first formal notice was taken of the special kind of choice faced by many adults who would like to recommence their education. Adult students in colleges classes were not all that new but as Stoel (1980) notes ". . .the time of the G.I. Bill had been one of catching up and accommodation. . ." but the newer candidates wanted options attuned to their own requirements. They sought "to create strategies for raising the consciousness of faculty and administrators about adult students". The combination of services they needed fitted no ready organizational prototype, consequently a variety of approaches flourished. Modest federal funding encouraged experimentation with information and counseling centers, largely at the discretion of the states. This paper draws on the experience in Pennsylvania for inferences about the organizational effectiveness of such centers. Such "effectiveness" is defined here in terms of "resource acquisition," a concept translated from work in organizational behavior. The experience of regional counseling centers in Ohio provided additional information about those organizational characters most frequently found in the sucessful units.

Introduction

By way of introduction, and given the climate of the moment, it is not amiss to remind ourselves that the United States has been committed for more than one hundred and fifty years to a major social experiment with education. The guiding question throughout that period has been, "How far can education in the form of schooling be extended in a population and still yield benefits to individuals and returns to society?" The new concern for adults coming after the development of the common school and the expansion of postsecondary education, is the latest manifestation of a fruitful and daring pursuit of the question.

Those adults who return to formal learning present a set of characteristics that are unique. Some of the distinctions arise from the learners while others reflect the educational environment. Among the learners they appear often in very basic forms. Marton (1977) and later his associate, Saljo, in Sweden found that adults bring a very rigid idea of "learning" to the experience - it is doing what the school tells you to do.

The nature of a decision to pursue an educational experience is also quite different for adults than it is among the youthful popula-

tion. For the young, education is culturally defined as an experience preparatory to a career and necessary to full adulthood. It is part of "growing up." For the adult, education must be defined in personal terms and has to be fitted into a life space already filled with family, job, and local responsibilities. Psychologically the experience of learning must accommodate a personality that is already well founded and individualized. The adult must, quite literally, "come to terms with" the prospect of education. In adult years the position of education is varied and becomes entwined with other motivations. Weathersby (Stoel 1980) has catalogued the reasons for study given by adults at different ages and the patterns among the groups are quite distinctive. In their studies of "well-being" and social indicators Andrews and Withey (1976) found education to be a discrete factor only in the early years of adulthood. After thirty concern for education is not a separate factor but is incorporated into concerns for standard of living, a good job, happy home life, decent housing etc.

The educational environment has expanded rapidly in the postsecondary sphere, even within the life time of many adults. There are many more institutions and many more kinds of institutions than there were even ten years ago. The great infusion of the community college into American life, the growth of specialized proprietary schools, and the appearance of short cycle courses in many settings; all these present an enrichment of the educational environment. But that rich institutional structure has become subtly "tracked" or compartmentalized in order to meet the needs of certain well-defined populations among the young. An adult often requires a different perspective, a view that describes an option, let us say accounting, in the various forms it appears <u>across</u> the system. He, or more often she, needs to find the option which fits best with previous education, with employment experience, and with personal circumstances. Institutions, even the most generous of them, seldom offer counseling of that scope.

It is against that background of new personal awareness and expanded opportunity that federal legislation supporting Educational Information Centers through grants to the states came into being.

When Title IV Subpart 5 Sec. 418 A&B was written into the Higher Education Act there was no clear definition for the "Educational Information Centers (EICs)" in the paragraphs. What was clear was the

existence of clients for those centers, a group of adults "who could benefit from education or training if it were not for cultural or financial barriers, physical handicaps, deficiencies in secondary education, or a lack of information about programs or financial assistance." Federal grants to the states begun in 1978 were for "planning, establishing, and operating Education Information Centers to provide educational information, guidance, counseling, and referral for all individuals. . ." The situation, then, was one in which a population of uncertain dimensions, potential adult learners, had been identified but the means to reach them left for the states to work out under the EIC label. The modest funding was frankly experimental in its intentions.

What has come forth under the EIC lable during the past several years is a new kind of human service unit. The Centers provide counseling in both the individual and group modes, a readily accessible pool of up-to-date information about educational programs, jobs, career planning and decision-making, and personal development. There is also a provision for referral to more specialized agencies or institutions when an individual can benefit from addtional attention and information. In addition, some EICs have followed the full emphasis of "brokering" and include active advocacy of client interests, preliminary credentialing, and diagnostic analysis.

With a few years of experience behind them some states wanted to find out in 1980 what the emerging Centers looked like. Of particular interest were those features that contributed to sound organization and operational effectiveness. These pages report an examination of six organizational attributes, dealing with structure, policy, and process as they appear in 28 EIC-type units in Pennsylvania. The study <u>does not</u> address EIC activities in terms of services to clients nor does it assess the response to community needs. Using the six organizational features, the sample is, first, described to give a sense of variety and similarity in the way these centers operate. Next, comparisons among the units are made by means of an intra-sample rating to identify areas that are most effectively organized. Third, a panel of national experts from outside the Commonwealth rated the organizational features in a forced choice model. Finally, a summary of conclusions and a list of the attributes associated with effectiveness are presented.

There are three principal avenues by which the operations of an EIC, or any public service unit for that matter, can be examined. By far the most popular in recent years has been the <u>needs analysis</u>

approach. By survey, interview, or by inferences drawn from demographic information, the needs of a particular population are defined (Pennington 1980). Presumably the worth of the service organization can be tested in terms of how well its activities serve those needs.

A second approach to public service organization is through follow-up studies that analyze client reactions to the services and activities of a unit. Difficult though they are to construct, these studies provide invaluable feedback for confirmation and planning. The most effective studies in this class are longitudinal, individual, case designs which are both expensive to conduct and difficult to analyze (Kordalewski, 1977; Toombs and Croyle, 1977; Arbeiter, 1978).

A third approach, the one developed here, has been less popular. The point of concentration is the organization itself. If needs assessments deal with inputs, and client follow-ups with treat outcomes, then studies of organization focus on process. In the effort reported here the sample group of EICs has been viewed in terms of "organizational effectivenss." As interest in statewide planning and interorganizational coordination grows, the topic will gain importance.

A. The Pennsylvania Setting and the Basis for the Project

As noted, the idea of a coordinated statewide system of Educational Information Centers (EIC) was incorporated in the Amendments of 1976 to the Higher Education Act. It was 1978, however, before the Office of Education offered interpretations flexible enough to encourage states to develop plans and implement the activities inherent in such plans (Hilton 1979). Pennsylvania developed a planning document, really a "plan to plan" or policy direction document, in 1978-79. Under that plan interested parties all across the state were encouraged to develop ways of producing EIC services. Aided by small grants a variety of distinctive units grew up. This variation was increased among EIC-type operations for several reasons. First, many of the functions emphasized by the EIC legislation were previously part of other federal and state legislation. Pennsylvania participated in those programs, but often without any plan for statewide communication or coordination among programs. Second, the tradition of private response to local public needs generated still other forms of independent counseling and referral agencies.

Together these motive forces produced a "random innovation" approach to the task of counseling adults. As Rivlin (1971) pointed out in the Gaither Lectures, this is a perfectly respectable approach

despite the impression of diffidence the term conveys. "Random innovation describes a strategy in which individual communities. . . are encouraged to try new approaches and see how they work. The rationale is simple: bureaucracy stifles innovation, 'change agents' must be formed and fostered if services are to become more effective."

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the project is to describe selected organizational features using the concept of organizational effectiveness in order to aid the development of statewide policy for Educational Information Centers. It was conceived as a feasibility study because so many of the basic dimensions were unclear at the start; how many EIC-type units are there? How can the EIC be operationally defined? What other functions do they incorporate?

In the previous paragraphs, the label "EIC-type" has been used. It is appropriate to define an Educational Information Center in more specific terms. The basic law, Title IV of the Higher Education Act, emphasizes "information" and "referral" services, acknowledges the need for "counseling," and stipulates information on educational, financial assistance, and job placement as the substantive core. (Christoffel et al. 1978). Heffernan (1975) added assessment and outreach to that list. Franklin (1979) includes diagnosis, "personal empowerment," and certification for past experience. The role assigned to the state is that of insuring access and coverage for these services. Martinko (1975) prepared an excellent description of regional patterns in Pennsylvania a few years ago. Few of the units reported here are limited to counseling and those operating under other legislation or on subcontract with CETA activities often include training, actual placement, orientation, and follow-up. Probably for this reason Jacobson (1979), in her national study, moved to a broader-based definition of "advocacy" centers, a concept that neatly incorporates EICs along with other similar types of organizations. From extensive national survey data Jacobson (1979) has identified four categories of service:

1. "Presentation of accurate, up-to-date labor market information which includes the tasks, skills and credentials associated with jobs.

2. Interpretation of information which includes helping to develop criteria for evaluation and comparison . . .

3. Examination of attitudes, interests and values. The counselor assists introspection.

4. Information regarding education and training."

Such information is made available in a variety of ways: one to one counseling, workshops, group counseling sessions, printed self-guides, interactive computer programs, etc.

EICs are intended to serve the needs of adults. For the purposes of this study "adults" is taken to include persons over the age of compulsory schooling and not presently enrolled as full-time students. Cross (1979) found the designation, "17 to 80 or older who combine adult responsibilities of job, home, and family with educational activities."

Concentrating on the organizational aspects of EIC-type units, as the current study does, merits some statement of justification. The structure and operation of EICs as organizations are intimately related to costs and quality of services. It is quite possible to create an organization that is so burdened with maintenance functions that over the long run it will become ineffective. Network situations are particularly susceptible to such overload. The features of good organization become, therefore, a basic component of planning and coordination.

There have been two notable attempts to incorporate a consideration of organization into a study of EIC-type operations. Jacobson (1979) has presented exemplars or "noteworthy programs" that carry out advocacy services for adults. The sponsorship dimension and key paths of interaction are given attention in her descriptions. Another study, also national in scope, was completed by Paltridge (1978) to give four basic models by which community based, client-centered information services can be provided for adults. As a precondition to the models he sets forth certain "basic elements." These happen to be the most problematical areas and, once they are met, the models are easily developed. We have treated them as resources. The preconditions include "clarity of purpose," "new opportunities for continuing education for mid-career adults," "community support," and institutional commitment to "special

programs for adults." The models suggested are: 1) "the community council model" in which the EIC operates under a broadly representative community council; 2) "the institutional consortium model" which places the EIC under joint sponsorship of the member institutions; 3) "the independent brokering agency" in which the EIC constructs its own appropriate network with sectors of the community; and 4) "the network of community services" where the EIC is one element in an interagency network.

The diversity of the situation in Pennsylvania does not permit a direct application of these models nor does it generate any native prototype. The "organizational effectiveness" idea, developed below, makes it possible to look at many components of organization and see the range of possibilities developed under each component.

C. An Organizational Approach

At this early stage in the development of the EIC idea, the history of every unit reflects a primary concern with who the clients are and what they need. Advance planning for these operations has not been a strong feature of either EIC's or state systems. The precipitous and uncertain nature of funding is one factor in this omission but the absence of precedent or experience with similar kinds of organizations plays the larger role. However, the key requirements of organizational structure cannot be ignored; they spring out of necessity.

But how can the organizational features of disparate units be examined? In terms of organization theory the EIC can be described as a not-for-profit, network related, input-driven, temporary agency, having multiple goals, a variable clientele, a service emphasis, and often, a weak programmatic base. It is an organization quite different from the highly structured institutionalized and bureaucratized forms that we meet daily in business, education, or public service. What features should be looked at? How can they be examined systematically? Can they eventually be ordered or compared in any useful way?

Fortunately, a flexible body of theory exists under the heading of "organizational effectiveness," which is widely applied in business and

public service settings. There are questions about how well the theory contributes to causal explanations and predictions but it has been valuable for describing attributes and interrelationships in organizations as diverse as insurance companies, hospitals, and universities (Seashore and Yuchtman 1967; Scott 1977; Cameron 1978; Coulter 1979).

Even though the limitations of the organizational effectiveness approach will not seriously impair this analysis they must be recognized. Useful as the concept is, there are problems of construct validity--how closely the idea can be matched with reality. Steers (1975) reviewed 17 multivariate models using the concept and found little consistency among the criteria they used. Goodman and Pennings (1977) point out that it is the "domain of effectiveness (that) has not been specified, and we know little about the nomological network that surrounds this concept." Other questions have been raised about the most appropriate constituency for assessing effectiveness whether it should be employees, managers, or external consultants.

Our interviews have followed the most accepted practice, that of meeting with the leaders or "dominant coalition" representatives (Goodman and Pennings 1977; Cameron 1978). Kahn (1977) concludes that, with all the shortcomings, "organizational effectiveness will undoubtedly remain in general usage as a convenient term for a category of research, as a social goal, and perhaps as a useful sort of administrative shorthand where goals are already common and shared." The use of the idea in this study falls within those bounds.

There are two common designs for assessing organizational effectiveness. The "goal centered" view and the "natural systems" view form the basis for two general models (Campbell 1977). The earlier ideas of analyzing internal processes of an organization (Steers 1975) and of developing a comprehensive "ideal type" (Parsons 1951) have fallen out of use.

The "goal centered" model travels under many synonyms: "goal attainment," "outcome models," "achievement of objectives," etc., but they all concentrate on an assessment of outputs. It seems almost a tautology that organizations that attain their goals should be considered "effective." The problems to this approach lie not with the

logic but with the evidence. There are almost always multiple goals, some to be attained only at the expense of others (Kahn 1977). Within an organization, goals vary by level and often change rapidly over time (Hannon and Freeman 1977). There is a surprising range to the choice of goals, even in similar organizations (Campbell 1977). The criteria problem is not solved by goal attainment approaches but only shifted to the realm of measurement and designation (Cameron 1978). Goal attainment models have enjoyed considerable attention in education. The "behavioral objectives" model developed out of Tyler's (1949) original formulations is widely used. "Management By Objectives" and "Cost Benefit" analysis are two other designs for goal-based assessments of effectiveness. As Perrow (1977) emphasizes there is a coercion to goal making and toward goals of a measurable kind in this approach and a consequent distortion of organizational activity. For a descriptive study these limitations are especially detrimental.

The "natural systems" approach, more particularly a "resource acquisition" model within that approach, is more appropriate to this study. "The natural systems view makes the assumption that if an organization is of any size at all, the demands placed on it are so dynamic and complex that it is not possible to define a finite number of organizational goals in any meaningful way. Rather, the organization adopts an overall goal of maintaining its viability or existence through time without depleting its environment. . . (Campbell 1977)." It is this relationship with the environment that emerged in a study by Seashore and Yuchtman (1967) which suggested a new approach. "We define the effectiveness of an organization as its ability to exploit its environments in the acquisition of scarce and valued resources to sustain its functioning." They also note the danger of imputing goals "or other expressions of the teleological principle, to organizations for they are not purposive, they merely exist and function." This conceptualization fits well with the new EIC-type organizations which are struggling to get started and to survive by means of resources that must come from the outside.

To examine effectiveness in these relatively new organizations in terms of their ability to acquire resources uses only a part of the concept. Cunningham (1978) provides a succinct summary of the systems-resource model as applied to seven public service units:

1. "The organization's ability to search out and respond to the properties of the external environment;

2. The organization's ability to use its resources in producing outputs and in maintaining and restoring the system; and

3. The organization's ability to bargain and optimize its use of resources in an environment with a number of decision makers, each with different objectives."

In a general way one can see in the above statements the full range of EIC activity encompassed from identifying resources, (Item 1), through the organization of appropriate services (Item 2), to the client orientation of particular services (Item 3-above).

Having elected the resource-acquisition idea, separating the main point from the larger model, the next question is, "What are the resources important to a new EIC?" Funds, obviously, and staff, but how many other resources? The six major categories used in this study and the subsets as well, came from organizational theory (Campbell 1977) and from literature on EIC-type activities (Jacobson 1979; Heffernan, et al. 1975). The resource list is displayed in Figure 1. It could be lengthened by adding "communication," "problem solving orientations," "motivation," "common values," and by converting some minor items, leadership for example, into major categories.

D. Design and Procedures

1) Design: The ultimate goal was to describe current practices in the field and identify those practices which were most closely related to effectiveness.

   a) From a sample of EIC-type operations in Pennsylvania, data on each resource category was collected by personal or telephone interviews with significant or leading persons in the operation.

   b) Descriptive material was content-analyzed, broken down into key phrases or descriptors.

   c) Descriptors were arrayed to display the variety and range of difference in the acquisition of resources.

   d) A descriptive summary of each resource category for each unit was made at this point. These data were as rated by

Figure 1
RESOURCE LIST

A. LEGITIMACY

1--SPONSORSHIP
2--POLICY FORMATION
3--DECISION MAKING
4--REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES
5--CONTROL & DISCRETION
6--REPORT & EVALUATION

B. FUNDING

1--PRIMARY SOURCE
2--OTHER SOURCES
3--POTENTIAL/IDEA
4--CHANGE OVER TIME
5--CONTRIBUTION IN KIND

C. STAFF

1--GENERAL: NUMBER, FULL TIME, PART TIME
2--SPECIALITIES
3--EXPERIENCE AND/OR EDUCATION
4--STAFF UPGRADING
5--INTERACTION: FORMAL/INFORMAL
6--LEADERSHIP STYLE

D. CLIENTS

1--INTENDED POPULATION
2--ACTUAL & PRIORITIES
3--RECORDS
4--INTAKE SOURCES/OUTREACH
5--FOLLOW-UP

E. CONNECTIONS

1--MEMBERSHIP NETWORK
2--IN-REFERRAL NETWORK
3--OUT-REFERRAL NETWORK
4--EXCHANGE OR INFORMATION NETWORK

F. INFORMATION

1--CATEGORIES
2--UPDATE NEEDS
3--NATIONAL/STATE SOURCES
4--IDEAL INFORMATION

the investigators. The rating scale was based on comparisons among the Pennsylvania sample institutions. A summary of the ratings gave an indicator of relative effectiveness.

e) Descriptors also were presented to a panel of expert judges, expert by reason of national involvement with operations of this kind. They sorted the description by ranking them in terms of "effectiveness."

f) Correlating the judgments of experts gave a profile of the most effective organizational factors.

2) Procedures: The EIC Project Study was based on a selected sample of 28 agencies, organizations, or offices which appeared to fulfill the definitional criteria of an EIC-type unit. Published listings of various human service agencies or organizations were compiled initially to form the pool of data from which the sample was chosen. Included within the data pool were listings of agencies and services compiled by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or obtained through personal contacts.

The completed master listing of all known operating EIC-type units in Pennsylvania numbered approximately 400 units. Throughout this project an attempt was made to "filter out" those organizations or services which had little relevancy to the EIC concept.

In determining the nature of the sample, a strong effort was made to reflect adequately the diversity among the various types of units. This diversity was manifested in terms of sponsorship, funding, clientele, staffing, and information, to name some examples.

Another factor of importance was geographic dispersion. An examination of the refined listing revealed organizations

clustered around urban areas, with fewer centers located in outlying regions. The final panel of units was not a random sample but a representative sample.

Letters of purpose and intent were sent to the prospective sample unit, a return postcard was enclosed, and a telephone call set up interview appointments.

On-site interviews generally required one and one-half to two hours to cover the scheduled topics. Telephone interviews required one-half to three-quarters of an hour.

Supplementary documents and publicity materials were collected in many cases. Throughout, the cooperation of individuals was excellent. Questions were seldom refused and often extra efforts were made to insure the accuracy of information. Naturally, the responses are colored by the enthusiasm of the key staff people and they should be because that enthusiasm is a critical ingredient. With few precedents and little guidance, getting an EIC-type unit into action requires a large personal investment by a few people. Apart from the data reported here the hallmarks of these organizations are the ingenuity, conviction, determination, and persistence of the people running them.

E. Findings: Descriptive

1) Legitimacy: Topics under this heading describe how each unit put together various associations to yield support, recognition, and acceptance. Also described are the authority and procedures under which the group operates. It is clearly beneficial to have as broad a base for authority as possible. The amount and scope of legitimacy, therefore, represent one kind of "resource" to be acquired. The scale along which observations were classified represents the degree to which legitimacy items are differentiated, extended, and formalized. For example, the strongest situation was one in which a private unit had built a strong Board of Directors, extensive

community advisors, multiple contributions to policy formation, and codified procedures.

a) Sponsorship: In terms of sponsorship the sample was distributed as follows: four year colleges and universities = 8, community colleges = 6, regional councils or "intermediate units" = 5, non-profit corporations = 4, consortium or library = 4, national program = 1.

1. Sponsorship is important both in the preparatory stage and for day-to-day operations, so important that it is doubtful whether an EIC can operate successfully in a fully independent condition.

2. Sponsors play a variety of roles by providing: (a) administrative and fiscal services, (b) support for planning, renewal, development, and, (c) positive input to the operations of the unit. All units had some kind of a relationship with a sponsor. Even independent corporate bodies devoted attention to the most active constituencies in the community.

3. In the most fully developed situations the sponsor not only supported and monitored unit operations but assumed a share of the responsibility for development and planning. Planning is one of the weakest areas of EIC organizations.

4. Where EICs were linked to service units under the same sponsorship, e.g. testing centers or GED training, there were benefits in the form of clearer goals and more certainty about support. The weakest situations were those in which sponsors failed to recognize the special nature of EICs and treated them as one more funded program or ignored them entirely. Colleges and universities, for example, must make special arrangements to fit the operations of an EIC into the format of an academic institution. Institutions that have been successful have established a separate administrative area, a "holding company," for single focus projects, some funded, others undertaken to serve the community.

b) Policy Making: The heavy emphasis on getting services to the clients and solving problems of "mission" makes any attention to policy seem costly and even superfluous to many staff. This is a mistaken view. By policy is meant guidelines and boundaries that apply over time and relate to the most frequent cases. Policy is embodied in statements of direction that shape decision and action. Without some policy position the tasks of administration take on an accidental quality. Forming a policy statement is also a way of mobilizing significant public and internal constituencies around a core of knowledge,

understanding, and commitment. Good policy does not deny freedom of action but confirms it. An indication of how well developed or sophisticated a unit is in building policy resources can be found in the degree to which boards and councils are used. The sample looked like this: Board of Directors = 9, Advisory Board = 6, Both Types of Boards = 1, No Policy = 1, Institutional Administration = 11.

1. Policy Formation: In this sample policy making is one of the partially developed aspects of EIC organization. Often it has been overlooked entirely, seldom is it written out, and frequently, the terms of a grant or external program alone are taken as policy. There were only three cases in the sample group where policy was completely developed and assembled in a way that reflected various interests in the area.

2. Policy Body: A common situation is the creation of an advisory group or weak board under the mistaken notion that such input represents policy. The essence of policy formation is shared responsibility and accountability, conditions that require an active, attentive policy-forming unit separate from administration and separate from groups designed for "brainstorming" or open discussion.

c) Decision Making and Reporting

1. Decision Making: Directors and staff have a great deal of freedom to make operational choices and decisions. Constraints arise from the terms of grants and the operating practices imposed by subcontracts. Some of these may turn out to be important and merit careful examination before grants are accepted.

2. Reporting: Practices vary widely from once-a-year reporting to a mixture of monthly, quarterly, and annual summaries. Again, as with policy formation, the value of reports for the dissemination and exchange of information is only partially developed. The importance of building public understanding for the unusual nature of EIC activity can be met by frequent and exclusive reporting.

3. Evaluation: Almost entirely defined by the terms of grants and the requirements of funding agencies, the creative and formative use of evaluation as a feedback device is still unusual in EIC organizations.

2) Funding: The acquisition of "resources" under this heading seems self-evident, "the more the better." In point of fact there are questions other than the amount of the resource and they have to do with the number and character of sources, their stability, and the conditions that go along with funds.

With respect to the number of sources of funding, our sample split evenly with 14 depending on a single source and the other half using multiple sources. As to the mode of funding 20 worked from contracts and grants primarily, eight drew on institutional budgets, and five combined fees from clients or dues from community memberships with other sources. Under the grant heading, allowing for duplication again, the following distribution emerged: CETA = 11, Vo Ed = 7, Title I = 5. The most effective arrangement is a commitment to multiple and well-mixed funding sources. The weakest situation, of course, is dependence on a single short-term grant. There is even a question as to whether such a condition should ever be set up by a grantor. If multiple grants are the condition of existence, as they seem to be, then the question arises about the internal allocation of funds.

The most successful condition, and it appears in several forms, is one where a core of maintenance, development, and service activities are budgeted on the most permanent source. Around this nucleus, sometimes an office in an institution, sometimes the center of a corporate body, a variety of special programs can be established. The search for funding in these times, when it may surface under entirely new titles next year, requires constant monitoring of legislation and administrative announcements. Such a process is most efficiently performed by making it part of the regular activities of an institutional sponsor. In any case, the importance of the planning function for EIC-type operations is greatest in the funding area. Difficult though it is to discern the nature of future federal and state programs, one can assume some form of modest support will continue. The most rational resolution

for EIC funding would be a link to financial aid, perhaps a provision that allowed students to use financial aid to pay for personal, pre-educational counseling.

3) Staff: Given the large pool of well-educated persons between the ages of 23 and 34 who are in the population--37.5 percent of the group have some college level schooling--it may not be surprising to find high quality staff throughout the EICs.

The current staff have a strong belief in the importance of their work which, in turn, generates a high sense of commitment. While adequate education, defined usually as a baccalaureate in fields like counseling, psychology, social work, or teaching, is a basic requirement almost every unit seeks additional qualifications. Most often these are personality characteristics but occasionally experience with the client group is desired. The job titles used in EICs such as "intake aide" and "life skills specialist," are distinctive and do not translate easily into conventional occupational titles. One attribute that is both unusual and valuable is the ability to work in a temporary and fluid organization. People tend to institutionalize what they do and how they do it. That tendency must constantly be redirected in an EIC-type unit.

The number of staff is less satisfactory and the distribution in the sample looks like this: 1-4 staff = 15 EICs, 5-9 staff = 7, 10-50 staff = 3, 51-100 staff = 3. The prospect of adequate full-time positions is not good and therefore, the most effective units had given considerable attention to the use of part-time workers and volunteers.

4) Clients: A strong resource position, in our view, is one in which the client groups are well defined and identified, and the definition is consistent with staff qualifications, facilities, and interests. The weakest position exists when the prospective clients are essentially undefined and the boundaries of interest unclear. The "open door" situation is

somewhat self-defeating because it makes contact with organized lines of in-referral almost impossible. One can only advertise, open the door, and hope the people who enter ask questions that can be answered. Several operations were effectively serving several quite different constituencies because they had taken time to specify functions clearly and to identify issues that could not be handled. Most EICs recognize their limitations in therapy situations but there are other areas, family counseling for example, where limits are less clearly acknowledged.

Records kept tend to be minimal except where CETA eligibility or other grant requirements intrude. EICs should probably look carefully at laws on disclosure and privacy with respect to their own records because, even under grants, they have an independent legal responsibility. Follow-ups show no regular pattern, the most frequent being a one-year survey.

One striking feature of the clients for this sample is that they are overwhelmingly female. This raises interesting and rather fundamental questions. Does the explanation for this disparity in gender lie in the nature of the services offered under the EIC label? Is it that males in our society want and need other kinds of information presented in other ways? In short, is the onus on the EICs to find and meet another set, an overlooked set, of needs?

Another possible explanation lies with the male life pattern. Is it that males are trained to avoid situations that have any semblance of therapy or an admission of deficiency? Do they see no prospect self-satisfying for effective action through education even in an "unschoolish" form? The client pool of this sample stimulates the question but few answers.

5) Connections: Throughout the years of EIC development, 1978 to the present, there has been a great deal of emphasis and discussion about "networks." It is acknowledged that information, personnel, and services are scattered. Cross communication provided by networks is the only way these resources

can be brought together to serve individuals. One must conclude on the basis of our sample, however, that the task is a more challenging one than most discussants recognize. Networking in all its aspects is poorly developed.

Membership networks include associations with both "other organizations like us" and "organization that are different but do some of the same things." One might explain the almost total absence of membership networks by the newness of the enterprise and by the scarcity of resources for which all must compete. There were some notable successes. In about seven instances, intra-county councils or associations built around an economic region exhibited effective interchange. In metropolitan areas the task is more difficult but it is clear that making a network, even a small one, requires a major investment of time and skill. For that reason it may be judicious for EICs to build on and seek membership in membership networks that already exist.

In-referral networking looks no better. The largest factor in bringing new clients in is word-of-mouth. The more effective EICs recognized this early and set up branches dispersed geographically through the service area. Often these are not pretentious, are staffed part time, and offer partial services, but they do "network."

Out-referral limitations are striking. In part there is an information problem, just learning who does what, but beyond that is the inability to make liaisons without spending time on the process. In a sense EICS come to a scene where the players already know their own role and show little interest in rewriting the script. The state employment service offices, in Pennsylvania and in other states as well, are a good example. They have defined their sphere of action to their satisfaction and seem unwilling to accommodate either in-referral or out-referral practices.

Based on observations of the sample, the problem is one of network construction. It is a serious matter because one major justification for EIC-type efforts, and other human service endeavors as well, is their ability to articulate the services of units and agencies already in existence.

One factor not yet adequately treated in either theory or discussion is the size of the network relationship a unit might be able to handle. An EIC with a staff of two or three could hardly be expected to comprehend the resources of a metropolitan area.

6) Information: There is a wide variation in the amount of information maintained and used by EIC units. Equally variable is the kind of information they elect to provide. Throughout the sample there was no strong evidence that some block of vital information such as educational program lists or job titles was missing from current operations. The only body of needed information mentioned consistently was a list of current job openings in the local region. Obviously the Bureau of Employment Security deals with the placement in such jobs but the EICs would find it useful to have indicators for steering people into job preparation programs. Apart from the regular body of information on educational programs, financial aid, and the educational requirements for jobs or professions, there seemed to be a growing need for self-assessment techniques, life-assessment, employability assessment, competency assessment, etc.

The possible benefits of large scale computer information systems or national job information fees do not come through clearly. Client interests in job information tend to be highly local. Some evidence among directors' comments suggest that financial aid information could be made available in a form that would allow the client to make some personal approximations. Print materials predominate and any use of milti-media information service is still ahead.

F. Findings: Intra-Sample Ratings

As noted in the earlier pages the idea around which these observations have been arranged is a "resource acquisition" approach to organizational effectiveness; the richer the supply and pattern of resources, the better the effectiveness. There are, of course, no absolute standards but it is possible to make comparisons within the sample group of 28 EIC operations. A rating scale of 1 to 5 with "1" representing high resource acquisition was used by the project staff. To illustrate the application, let us take the funding category. At the top position, number 1 rating, were those, 4, with multiple and diverse types of support that extended over three or more years. At the lowest rating were units with a single source of short-term funding which was about to run out, 7 in categories 4 and 5.

TABLE 1

RATINGS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN SIX AREAS
BASED ON INTRA-SAMPLE COMPARISONS OF 28 EICs

	(High)		RATINGS		(Low)	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	Rating
Mean						
Legitimacy	11	10	4	3	0	1.96*
Funding	4	11	7	6	1	2.71
Staff	6	14	8	0	0	2.07*
Clients	10	10	3	3	2	2.18*
Connections	1	5	13	6	3	3.18
Information	2	8	7	11	0	2.96

n = 28

In the pattern displayed in Table 1 it is immediately clear that the areas of legitimacy, staff, and clients are in better shape, generally speaking, than connections, information, and funding. Many EICs have developed satisfactory organizational features in top. three resource areas. On the other hand everyone has some difficulty with network relationships. The client area is rather mixed because a number of units are having difficulty defining who they are best equipped to serve or what the most needy local groups are. The widest scattering is found in funding which seems to fit well with intuitive analysis. Funding sources are found in so many forms and at such varied levels that one would expect the organizations to reflect confusion.

The principal contribution in this scheme of ratings is that it separates general issues from individual problems.

G. Findings: External Judgments

To supplement the intra-sample comparisons with a broader perspective on the organizational attributes of EICs, a panel of three judges knowledgeable of the national scene but not involved in Pennsylvania was invited to participate in the project. Each judge has had experience not only with the observation of EIC-type operations across the nation but also with legislation, methods of analysis used elsewhere, and client characteristics. Each has made major contributions to the literature on EICs.

To marshall the judgments of this three member panel, a Q-sort technique in a semi-structured, one-way mode was developed. Judges received one card in each resource area (legitimacy, funding, staff, etc.) for every sampled unit, a total of 168 color coded cards. The card had several descriptive phrases drawn from the site-visit and interview reports, each reflectng one attribute in that category for that institution. For example, a card labeled "Legitimacy" for one EIC reads:

--"Sponsored by Community College
--College writes grant proposals and administers funds
--No advisory board
--EIC is a branch of campus counseling center."

The judges were called upon to place a particular number of cards into each of five envelopes which were ranked 1 to 5 with 1=high effectiveness. Two cards had to be put into the top rank and bottom rank envelopes, five had to be put in the two intermediate envelopes, and fourteen had to be put in the middle envelope making it a forced choice rating conforming to a normal distribution.

For each resource area the ratings among the three judges, A, B, C, were compared using Pearsons correlation coefficient (r=). The results of the interrater correlations are displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 2
RATINGS AMONG JUDGES: Correlations (Pearson's r =) between choices of three judges A, B, and C

LEGITIMACY	A:B = .69 B:C = .38 A:C = .23	
FUNDING		A:B = .91 B:C = .69 A:C = .66
STAFF	A:B = .54 B:C = .38 A:C = .46	
CLIENTS		A:B = .65 B:C = .27 A:C = .15
CONNECTIONS	A:B = .72 B:C = .34 A:C = .35	
INFORMATION		A:B = .58 B:C = .62 A:C = .69

It is clear from this display that there was reasonably high agreement among the judges in only two areas, funding and information. There was modest agreement on staff and connections. On legitimacy the picture is mixed with A and B in agreement but C differing markedly on the low end of the scale. There is some

likelihood that the client area did not provide enough information for effective judgment. Those attributes selected by the judges were then compared with the internal ratings to give a summary of characteristics associated with effective resource acquisition.

H. Conclusions:

1) It is well for the reader to keep in mind that the following pages deal only with the organizational structure. They do not speak in any direct way to the topic of client services. Often, resourceful people can overcome or set aside what appear to be major organizational problems and develop highly effective client relationships by substituting personal energy for scarce resources. To the conclusions generated by the Pennsylvania study we have added supplementary conclusions that come out of the Ohio experiment with four regional EIC operations. [The Ohio information will be shown in bracketed sentences.] Based on proposals four grants for regional EICs were made to Ohio agencies that were already providing some form of counseling service. All four were required to make a directory of existing services in their regions but beyond that they were free to create their own organization and select the methods of serving clients. An evaluation and summary of the efforts was made in the Spring and Summer of 1980.

Two general conclusions came through during the field study phase:

(i) AN EIC CAN BE OPERATED EFFECTIVELY UNDER A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS. There is no ideal form, no archetype. The most effective units are a product of self-driven evolution. They have defined in clear, but not necessarily simple terms, the client groups they intend to serve, the kind of functions they will perform, their relationships within the community which is usually a geographic or economic (rather than political) area, and their ties with a sponsoring unit.

[It is possible to attach the EIC functions to an organization that has other similar functions only if the mission if separately defined and the division of work understood in advance.]

There is a kind of "myth" which envisions the ideal of a free-standing EIC, generously funded from one source on a continuing basis, serving completely anyone who needs any kind of career or educational assistance. The danger in such a set of wishes is that they run exactly counter to the lines along which the better EICs have really developed. Little in the future prospects for funding and legislation give much support to the false ideal.

(ii) A SECOND GENERAL CONCLUSION IS THAT THE TASK OF COMMUNICATING WHAT EICs ARE ALL ABOUT IS CONSISTENTLY AND SERIOUSLY UNDER ESTIMATED. Everyone engaged in this worthwhile but very new endeavor needs to keep a few basic facts in mind. To begin with, none of the major constituencies--clients, community leaders, legislators, educators--has ever had any personal experience with anything like an EIC. Each of them, in a sense, is being asked to commit something--money, endorsement, participation, moral support, etc.--to an activity which they cannot understand intuitively. Therefore in the case of EICs, everything they do, every activity, every communication, must carry some burden of explaining, illustrating, and demonstrating <u>what</u> they do and <u>why</u> it is needed. Several of the specific conclusions and even more of the recommendations emphasize the point that building understanding of a basic kind is a universal mission for EICs.

a) SPONSORSHIP MAKES IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SURVIVAL QUOTIENT OF EICs. From a good sponsorship situation, the organization can gain support with administrative services such as payroll, printing, and contract service. A wider knowledge of and access to funding sources is a frequent benefit. The best sponsors give an informal but gentle oversight and feedback on operations to help avoid

wrong turns and misplaced energy. Where the sponsor provides an "umbrella" for several organizations there is often an advantageous clustering of functions around what might be called a primary network. Good sponsorship does not necessarily involve a great deal of time from the sponsor; more often it is a matter of access to information and support services that allow the unit to devote more time to clients.

b) Policy formation: The value of good policy comes naturally to no one; it usually has to be learned by mistakes.

1. Consciously developed policy statements are never perfect but they serve as guidelines for action to all the staff, they permit a better interpretation of outside demands or opportunities, and they give public notice to help define participation, responsibility, and accountability.

2. Good policy statements are a product of some kind of consensus, are written, endorsed, and realistic.

3. Policy is different from administration and, in fact, should set the framework within which administrative decisions are made. A policy position lays out boundaries of what will not be done or even attempted as well as what is to be responsibly undertaken. Only about a third of the sample group had paid full attention to their policy positions.

4. [Sponsors may be limited by legislation to certain areas or populations that do not correspond with the EIC service area. Such boundaries and jurisdictional limits can be ascertained in advance.]

c) The Policy Unit: There are all kinds of boards--advisory, executive, directing, governing, fiduciary.

WHETHER A BOARD IS GOOD OR BAD DEPENDS ON HOW WELL ITS FUNCTIONS ARE UNDERSTOOD. The expectations and responsibilities of the board as a body and in terms of membership can be defined to enhance the process of leadership. Even when the legislation requires some kind of "advisory" body the unit should add its own criteria and make the selection carefully. Communicating the essentials of an EIC operation to the active elements of the community, exercising informal lines of influence, and opening new areas of support can all be products of an effective board.

d) Planning: With EICs, planning tends to be very short term (one or two years), compelled by outside circumstances, a grant renewal for example, and narrow in its emphasis (most common is a focus only on funding). When an operation flows on without clear break points, planning tends to be neglected. The best units were using a five-year planning horizon with an operation plan covering three years. They included staff expansion and replacement, the next client groups to be reached, and lines of exploration with information and networks. In the client service area, planning is a basic necessity if the unit expects to serve socio-economic groups who are "unlike" the staff itself.

e) Reports: These are usually given narrow circulation although many interviewees found them to be an excellent medium for explaining the EIC to the interview team. Construction of annual reports in a format aimed at public circulation offers a relatively easy way of cultivating understanding. With that understanding comes curiosity and from curiosity emerges interest, followed by support and participation. The tendency to view reports as an obligation was widespread although perhaps a fourth of the sample had expanded their reports' utility by wider circulation.

f) Funding: The level of funding for all but four of the sample was sufficient to sustain a modest level of operations, not munificent, but enough for this year. There is a clear and growing understanding that multiple sources must be developed. The pattern of sources, however, is varied and changeable. Keeping track of where and when to apply for funding is difficult and frustrating. However, one can discern a workable combinaton when private funding from community or institution sources is linked with state grants and with federal funds by subcontract or grant.

g) Staff: The EICs have been able to draw on a backlog of educated talent and good will. The results are evident--in the sound quality of the staffs. For the future, and to some extent in the present, several issues arise. The opportunities for staff development are now limited. The primary limitation is that time and money have not been set aside or written into contracts to allow for professional renewal through attendance at national conferences, workshops, or other events. Support for the preparation of professional articles or research reports is equally limited. The small number of staff available in most operations is a cause for concern. Across the sample group, relatively little effort has gone into planning for the use of part-time workers or volunteers. Of course, this is exactly the impasse of working with too few staff--the time and effort needed to set up job designs for using other than full-time persons is not readily available.

h) Clients: Definition of clients contributes in major ways to organizational effectiveness. In the best situations the intended client group reflects both the capacities of the staff and the needs of the community. It is the latter matching which displays the greatest weakness. Finding out who can benefit is a difficult chore because

most regions have little in the way of data to show the most needy populations.

[Duplication of services from the viewpoint of the client is rare and the essential problem is that services are too few. People may find the setting or the title of the agency more influential on their choice of action than the sample existence of the service.]

i) Networks: These are crucial to the EIC concept. Nowhere else does the scope of the task these units have set for themselves come through more clearly. Networking in any form--membership, in-referral, out-referral, or information exchange, is not well developed. Some units have been able to join good regional networks of membership based on a service region. Others have benefited from clusters of service units at the same institution or in the same community whose activities complement each other to form natural networks. Formal associations like consortia do not automatically produce network relationships. It is clear that networks must be constructed and maintained by a significant investment of leadership. There is some indication that networking ideas have been too ambitious. The more successful exchanges build up slowly by addition and subtraction of significant participants. If there is one starting point, it probably lies in the creation of a membership network, that is, ties that create a sense of "belonging" to a group.

j) Information: No major difficulty was encountered in obtaining and developing information to support counseling. Most EICs exercised great resourcefulness in building up collections of print materials from many sources. Equally effective were the self-prepared pamphlets that went to clients at many locations. There was no evidence of a pressing, well-defined need for a large scale information system of any kind. The realities of

> operation are that local information is what clients are looking for and competent staff handle those needs easily. Actually educational information and career information are quite different in one respect, their permanence. The usefulness of career information is markedly affected by the current employment market. That information is not readily available in prepared form and some EICs have developed their own means of gathering it informally.
>
> [The EICs generate, in approximate terms, the following disposition of client outcomes. About one third go to educational institutions in the region: Another third go to more specialized agencies dealing with jobs, family matters, or personal issues. The final third simply take away information and use it in an idiosyncratic way.]

In conclusion, the conditions of funding for EIC activity from federal sources are now at new levels of uncertainty. As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) observed: "What happens in an organization is not only a function of the organization, its structure, its leadership, its procedures or its goals. What happens is also a consequence of the environment and the particular contingencies and constraints deriving from that environment." The fiscal constraints of the present environment will cancel the development of Educational Information Centers and curtail the operation of brokering agencies. What remains is the desirability of, in some cases need for, this kind of service, the recently accumulated experience about how it can be done, evidence of organizational effectiveness, and that long persistent saga of expanding education in American society.

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